/390 cont./

125 434 artisans it was necessary, aside from their family accounts, to consider those of their occupational activity; with regard to the cultivators, it is certainly /391/ among them that the greatest percentage of error is found. We have taken into account the proceeds from the sale of their harvest, often underestimated by the one concerned, the portion for home consumption, and the income obtained by supplementary activities practiced in the dry season, in order to arrive at an income figure that could be compared to that for salaried workers.

125 434 462 [536] [565] But, nearly all of the women, almost all of whom declare themselves to be "without occupation," have minor sources of income that permit them to balance a budget, or at least partially to make up a deficit. It is often a matter of small-scale commerce, sometimes domestic work, and sometimes the talents of an actress which attract sympathy and gifts, as we verified for a family of the griot /singer, storyteller/ caste. It was therefore necessary to look closely at each case before setting an exact figure. We nevertheless believe that we have been mistaken in two or three cases, which will reveal themselves below.

125 434 592 [104] [594] Of course, there were often cases where in a family, or rather let us say in the same "unit of consumption," since this is the term that we shall use most often (1), several persons

1. Each time that we speak of "family," it is actually the unit of consumption that is involved. To designate the familial grouping in the Western sense of the word, we shall use the term "restricted family."

received income. The entire income retained is not always the sum of these incomes. We have studied the budgets of groups and not the budgets of individuals. Now, these groups, these "units of consumption," only rarely correspond to the restricted family of Western type. They often contain individuals who, whether or not they have a kin tie with a member of the restricted family, on the one hand participate in the economic

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called 'Les Ballets Sereres du Sine Saloum,' a group of dancers who had won the Territorial Cup in 1957.

The theatre was packed. I was sitting next to an ample Jollof matron, a small child strapped to her back, its tiny nose buried in the pink muslin of her dress. Another child sat on her knee, beturbanned and clothed just like its mother. From the woman's forehead dangled three shining American dollars. Unfortunately a similar Jollof woman sat immediately in front of me, her black horsehair wig and tall tulle turban almost totally obscuring my view. A strong scent of 'Bint El Sudan' manufactured in East London perfumed the room as the curtains rose to the first dance, 'Love and its Caprices', which was to be the theme of the evening. The variations, the programme told me, were to include '*Allo M'Bissine*'—'My fiancée has beaten me because a boy who loves me told me "Hello M'Bissine" ', and later '*Khodia Kha Lola*'—'Why do you cry Khodia? Only the Gods understand what a tear says'. Ending with an initiation dance of future circumcision candidates. One of the most memorable dances was a solo by a woman with a baby strapped to her back, its head swaying backwards and forwards like a punch ball. The child uttered not a murmur as its mother danced into a frenzy, singing at the top of her voice, and in the background a corps of drums beat an hysterical rhythm. It was an entertaining evening, with a beautiful dance of a slight youth, his black-brown body shining sleekly in the glow of the footlights, contrasting with the powdered copper of his lissom partner, a girl of singular beauty with entrancing opalescent eyes.

After the performance there was a cast party to which Faye, the young secretary of the theatre, invited me. The dancers, various guests, European and African, drank bottles of Coca-Cola and orange squash. Amongst them was Ka Abdou Anta.

He was a handsome young man, but he dragged continuously at a cigarette and his teeth were discoloured with nicotine. His jacket, once well cut, was misshapen by papers stuffed into the pockets. My first meeting with Ka had been two years before but we had not been introduced. He was rehearsing a scene from his play *La Fille des Dieux*, which he was producing for the Théâtre du Palais. It was highly symbolic: a somewhat uneasy compromise between tribal metaphysics and the classical French

7:Crowder J-5 (1955-1958) 1959
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536 theatre. But the writing was powerful and distinguished. My most vivid memory of Ka at that time was an ear-shattering torrent of abuse directed at his leading lady: 'Pas de Fred Astaire ici. Çe n'est pas le Music Hall.'

Today that play is a thing of the past, which nevertheless brought him fame. Now he is engrossed in a piece about a young schoolteacher who is sent to a pagan animist village in the south of the Senegal, to found its first school. The play centres on the conflict between the educated teacher and the local witchdoctor who opposes the school. Deep in Ka's intellect is a striking preoccupation with the conflict of occidental reason with the seemingly irrational metaphysics of the forest and the bush.

Ka was seized by numerous other friends so we agreed to meet the following day at a café in the Avenue William Ponty, Dakar's main thoroughfare.

[541] The small café was crowded. Across the street the Café de Paris with its large, bad painting of Montmartre, was half empty and its clientele, sitting at the iron street tables, stared at us with vague interest. Ka was talking animatedly about nineteenth-century Russian novelists and the decline of Russian literature today. He was very typically '*rive gauche*' and indeed we might well have been in St. Germain des Prés.

'Of course, I think that Huxley is more essentially English than Graham Greene,' my companion continued in a new vein.

Later I went with Ka to his room in a small, dingy hotel in the back streets of Dakar. 'I prefer living here, away from my relations. At least one is free.' I wondered whether it wasn't because it reminded him of his life in Paris.

Together we read his latest play about Chaka, in which he treats the great Zulu as a narcissist. Once again I was struck by the power of his writing, the economy of his style. We fingered through copies of *Présence Africaine*, *Traits d'Union* and *Afrique en Marche* where he and his fellow intellectuals have their works published.

[204]

668 571 Most striking of all is the cultural revolution, so marked in Dakar, but gaining momentum from all parts of the French West African Federation. Ka Abdou Anta is a part of this revolution, which has produced a generation, albeit small, of intellectuals who can vie on equal terms with their counterparts in Europe.